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RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0386
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0369
RUEAHQA/AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABUJA 001907

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W, INR/AA
DOE FOR GEORGE PERSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PM](#) [EPET](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: NIGERIA: MEND DECLARES CEASEFIRE FOLLOWING WEEK OF
HEIGHTENED ACTIVITY

REF: ABUJA 1898

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Cheryl Fernandes for reasons
1.4. (b & d).

11. (SBU) Following a September 13 raid by the Joint Task Force (JTF) on the Elem Tombia area (south of Port Harcourt, Rivers State), the armed group MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta) mounted a week-long string of attacks against oil interests in the Niger Delta region. However, MEND promised in an e-mail directed to Nigerian media outlets to begin an indefinite, unilateral ceasefire effective 0100 hours, September 21. According to press reports, the MEND statement maintained that "after one week of intense lopsided fighting and an unprecedented sabotage on the oil industry prompted by an unprovoked attack on civilian communities, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta will downgrade the oil war code named "Hurricane Barbarossa" to a state of alert code named "Tropical Storm Vigilant." "We hope that the military has learnt a bitter lesson. The next unprovoked attack will start another oil war that will be so ferocious that it will dim the pleas of the elders. That blood oil war will come in the form of another hurricane and its devastation and mode of operation will be different from what was seen with Barbarossa."

12. (SBU) Press also reported that MEND leader Victor Ebikabowei (Boyloaf), Niger Delta Vigilante leader Ateke Tom, Niger Delta Patriotic Front leader Farah Dangogo, and Ijaw Youth Leadership Forum leader Chief Ekpemupolo were reportedly sending delegations to Abuja on September 22 to discuss conditions for laying down arms and pave the way for the smooth inauguration of the Niger Delta Ministry (reftel). The delegations will also reportedly discuss terms for Henry Okah's release and amnesty for militants.

13. (C) Kwara State Governor and leader of the Governors' Forum Bukola Saraki told the Ambassador on September 22 that the ceasefire was a joint, not unilateral, effort coordinated by the Yar'Adua administration, and that the ceasefire would start today or tomorrow. (Comment. If, indeed, the ceasefire is a negotiated agreement brokered by the GON rather than a unilateral action on the part of MEND, it may be designed to give the new Niger Delta Ministry the breathing room it needs to begin to address the underlying issues of the region. On the other hand, it may be yet

another attempt to kick the ball further down the field once again -- avoiding action but giving the impression of movement. End Comment.)
SANDERS